Rede vom 10. November 1933

Speech given by the Reich Chancellor at the Siemens Factory in Berlin, November 10, 1933.

Fellow Germans! My German workers!

If I speak to you today and thus to millions of other German workers, then I have more right to do so than

anyone else. I grew up among you, stood among you once myself, was among you during four and a half years of war and now I speak to you, to whom I belong, with whom I still feel connected with today and for whom I am ultimately fighting. Because the fight would not be necessary just for my own sake. Nor would I lead it for a class or for a particular caste. I lead the fight for millions of our brave, hard working, creative people.

I am addressing you in an historic hour. Once the German nation failed in such an hour; the consequences were dreadful. I don’t want the German people to make the same mistake a second time. The consequences would be dreadful again for many, many years.

In my youth, I was a worker like you, and through hard work, through study and, I can also say, through hunger I slowly worked my way up. But in my essence, what I was I have always remained.

When I entered politics after the war, I did so in the belief that our nation had been ill-advised by its politicians, in the belief that the German people faced a horrific future as a result of this bad leadership. I did it then with the greatest justification because I was not one of those who were somehow responsible for the war. I was no more responsible for the war than any of you; for at that time I was just as unknown as you, another one whom fate was passing by. Certainly, I did not count myself among those

who opposed their own nation at that time. I was convinced that one had to stand up for the fate of the nation if the entire people were not to suffer terrible things sooner or later. That’s what distinguished me from the others who turned against Germany at that critical time.

When the war was over, I took the right as a soldier from the front to stand up for what I knew to be right. Before that, I had never spoken and had never been involved in any parliamentary activity. I was a person who simply earned his daily bread.

It was only after the end of the war that I went to the people, when I saw that the politicians were not doing what they had promised the nation, but that the opposite was happening, and worked with six other quite humble workers and founded a movement based on my own belief that the idea that the fate of even one class can be improved through class struggle is a mistake. We have experienced this mistake on a large scale throughout the world, most clearly in the Treaty of Versailles.

This treaty is based on two fundamentally false theses.

First, the outcome of a war, in which there must of course always be winners and losers, can be the only valid legal

norm in the life of nations for all time. One side, the winner, could always be in the right and the loser without any rights. This is an impossible thesis on which no community of nations can be built.

The second thesis, which is just as wrong, is to believe that a nation can do well only at another nation’s expense. This is an awful mistake!

These two theses, on which the Treaty of Versailles was based, have had a devastating effect, not only on Germany but also on other nations. The world has not been appeased, as was declared at the time; on the contrary, the world has been plunged into continuously new disputes and continuously new conflict. And the second idea was just as absurd: to weigh down the economy of a great nation with unbearable burdens on the one hand and to destroy it on the other, to cut off all its resources. We then saw that Germany, in order to meet its economic obligations, was forced to throw itself into the export market under any circumstances and that the fiercest international competition then began, that the political debt was gradually transformed into a financial debt and that the payment on interest was as much as the payments themselves.

We then experienced how restructuring came about, how millions of people had to scrimp and save, hounded by

one thought: we must export at any cost in order to obtain foreign currency. This has gradually destroyed the domestic market and has created an army of millions of unemployed people. I realized, my fellow countrymen, that we would never be able to escape this madness as long as we tolerated the same madness within ourselves. What was advocated on a large scale, the dual rights of nations, the theory that one people must be doing badly economically so that the other can survive - we preached this theory among ourselves in exactly the same way.

What’s the difference between the theory of class struggle and the theory of this international struggle?

They are the same thing! The same madness to think that one class could prosper at the expense of other.

At that time, I was convinced deep down that the nation had to come together across classes themselves. It was natural that many interested parties would oppose this. It was understandable that the organizations that formed the classes would resist this. But the nation cannot be allowed to go to ruin because these organizations want to thrive. A nation does not live for theories, not for agendas, not even for organizations; all of these must serve the life of a nation, and today we are seeing that the conflict between nations is also being fostered by extremely specific stakeholders.

It is a rootless international clique that incites the nations against each other. These are the people who are at home everywhere and nowhere, who have no soil on which they have grown, but who live in Berlin today, could be in Brussels tomorrow, in Paris the day after tomorrow and then again in Prague or Vienna or London, and who feel at home everywhere.

(A man in the audience shouts “Jews!”)

They are able to do business anywhere, but the nation cannot follow them; the nation is chained to its soil, bound to its homeland, bound to the living conditions of their state, their country. The farmer is tied to his land. The worker depends on his work. If the nation goes to ruin, where will they be taken care of? What does international solidarity between the classes mean today? These are merely theories in a time when there is despair everywhere and people are struggling hard to survive. Our power does not lie in this international phantom, it rests in our homeland.

My goal was always to awaken and strengthen this power. I therefore created a completely new movement that was to build a new community right from the start, overcoming all signs of corruption. I do not believe that a nation should go to ruin because certain organizations

can only prosper from fratricidal struggle. I began the fight against this and set up an agenda based on the premise that the class and origin of an individual meant very little. These things are short-lived, they are insignificant compared to the permanent existence of the nation. The people as such are the eternal source and the eternal fountain that always gives new life, and this source must be kept healthy.

What is a theory worth to me when I see 7 million unemployed? Would they be happy if I proclaimed theories? I must first try to give them bread and work again. I knew that I could only accomplish this task if I could unite the entire strength of the nation for this goal. It was clear that such an agenda, in which National Socialism must be combined with Socialism, would not be realized in just a few years, but that a great deal of care was necessary, and that this future State would have to bring up the people themselves. I started with six or seven men. Today it is the largest German movement, not by chance and not because the path was made easy for me, but because the ideas I built on are right. That is the only reason they were able to prevail.

You can well imagine, my workers, that when somebody in this situation begins to establish a movement, success will not just fly at them; that’s obvious. It takes great tenacity and an incredible will to even begin this work.

And I would like to say this to you today: If I had this belief, I only had it because I knew the people and because I never doubted the quality of the German people. It wasn’t the white-collar workers that gave me the courage to begin this gigantic work, I only found the courage because I myself knew the German worker and the German farmer.

I knew that these two classes would one day become the pillars of the new Reich, and that then the white-collar workers would automatically join them. A gigantic agenda! And when I was called on January 30th after fourteen years of bitter struggle, I had only one wish: to fulfill this great task. What does a title mean to me? I don't need a title! My name, which I earned through my own efforts, is my title. I just want posterity to confirm that I have made a respectable and honest effort to realize my agenda. We have worked in these nine months and achieved great things.

Perhaps there will be some among you who cannot forgive me for destroying the Marxist parties. I say to you, my friends, that I destroyed the other parties exactly the same way! I didn’t get rid of representation for the workers. No, I got rid of representation for all of the classes. I never said that in this new State the worker should no longer have representation. On the contrary, I am convinced that only equal rights for all can create an

acceptable situation for all. However, I never understood this to mean the impropriety of the classes to wage a permanent war against one another. That is not the purpose of our existence; its purpose is that, through mutual thinking, mutual effort, and mutual work, we create the most acceptable life possible for our fellow countrymen, not for one class or for one caste, but for all.

I said you had to give me four years. Well, when I came to office, Germany had over 6.2 million unemployed and now there are 3,710,000. That’s an impressive achievement for nine months. We didn’t just sit back and watch, but have worked hard, day after day.

If someone says, yes, but our standard of living has not improved, then I answer that the first thing was to reintegrate people back into the work process. The next thing will be to increase consumer power. That is in our own interest. I must say to the German middle class, don't think that it is in your interest if the worker is struggling. On the contrary, the more consumer power they have, the better off you will be. It’s not true that the success of one comes at the expense of another, you increase the strength of a nation as a whole and it will benefit everyone again.

We have begun an enormous educational task, and I know that it is far from over. And when idiots on the left

and right stand there and say: "But you'll never get us," then I say, we don't care, but we will get your children. We are raising them to a different ideal from the start and raising them to be together. We have begun the war against corruption, and I have been almost ashamed to tell you the results, because I was always afraid that the whole German people would be identified with these good-for-nothings.

But if I want to give the German people work and bread again, if I want to put them back in order, then I can only do that if they have peace and quiet. No one should expect me to be so crazy as to want a war.

I don't know how many of the foreign statesmen even took part in the war as soldiers. I took part in it. I know it. But I do know that none of those inciting hatred against Germany today and slandering the German people have ever heard a single whistling bullet.

During these nine months we have only concerned ourselves with our nation, only studied our tasks, only wanted to solve them. And I believe that other statesmen would do well to devote themselves to their own tasks as well. During these nine months I have not taken a single measure that could offend any statesman or hurt any nation. On the contrary, during these nine months I repeatedly explained that the nations must become

sensible again and not allow themselves to be incited against one another by a small clique of international people. I declared that the German people have only one wish: to be able to live their own lives. We should be left alone; we should not interfere in the affairs of others, and they should not interfere in ours. If anyone in the world can feel threatened, it’s only us.

We want peace and understanding, nothing else! We want to shake hands with our former enemies, a line must be drawn again under the most miserable time in world history.

People say I'm not being honest. I say, what am I supposed to do to make you believe us? My fellow countrymen, I believe that at a time like this you have to be very tough and above all you must not deviate a centimeter from your rights.

I am convinced that all problems in life, when different partners appear, can only be solved if the partners have equal rights. This is also the case in the economic process. Imagine that in the economic process one partner, whether entrepreneur or worker, has no rights at all and the other has all rights and all power. You yourself know that no tolerable contract and no tolerable situation is then possible.

It is exactly the same in the life of nations. It is not acceptable for one people to have all rights and the other people to have no rights at all. That won’t work! If there is anything that can disturb the peace and create conflict, it is such an unequal distribution of rights, individually as well as internationally. And I would be lying to the German people if I promised them a better economy without at the same time demanding their equal rights in the world. One cannot exist without the other, and I can tell you that here too I am only representing the rights of the German nation. So long as I take this position, I will behave in such a way that no one can say to me: You talked differently before, than the way you act now.

Do not say to me: What does honor mean? My workers! Honor in this case means equal rights and equal rights means the possibility of being able to stand for one's own interests before others.

If the world wants to dictate to us, then it will be without my signature. And if the world says: Yes, we are forced to do this because we cannot trust you. Why? When has the German people ever broken their word? Unfortunately, they have mostly kept their word too stubbornly and too faithfully. If we had not stood so stubbornly and so loyally by our allies during the World War, Germany might have fared better. We protest against the idea of judging the

character of a people by its emigrants. Nor do we judge other peoples by those who complain about their country here. We do not insult the English and French by some random person who is just as little at home here as he was in Paris before and in London tomorrow. These are not the valuable elements of a nation. The valuable ones are those who are here, who work and create, not those international gypsies. I oppose this clique with the commitment of the whole nation and my own statements. This is the reason for the referendum on November 12th.

For many centuries, foreign countries have counted on having allies in Germany. First, it was the characterless princes who coldly betrayed their people, then it was parties and ideologies. They have always had allies. Now I want to show the enemy that they no longer have allies in Germany. What feels united today is the people themselves among each other. For centuries they sought their fate in disunity and gathered unspeakable results. I think that we are now seeking our destiny in unity, that we are now attempting to shape our destiny in an inseparable community of the people.

I am the guarantee in Germany that this community will not tip in favor of one side or the other for our people. You can see me as the man who belongs to no class, who belongs to no caste, who stands above all of that. I have nothing but a connection to the German people. For me,

everyone here is equal. What do I care about the upper class, what do I care about the middle class, what do I care about the working class? I am only interested in the German people. I belong to them alone and that is what I am committed to.

And on November 12th I want to present this German nation to the world as it really is! They should see that what I am declaring are not the words of one individual, but that the whole nation stands behind them as one.

I ask you to do the same: stand up for this concept of equal rights, just as you yourself had to fight and have fought for your own rights as German workers. In the same way, we must fight today for the right to life of our entire people, we must stand up for it and must not give up our own honor and our equal rights. You must therefore understand my decision when I now declare to the high international powers: We are happy to take part in every conference, we are happy to take part in every international treaty - but always only as equals.

As a private citizen, I have never forced my way into a distinguished society that did not want me or that did not see me as an equal. I do not need them, and the German people also have just as much character. We are not involved somewhere as shoe shiners, as inferiors. No, we

either have equal rights or the world will not see us at any more conferences.

Today, fate has given me more power than any chancellor in Germany has had in many decades. I cannot give up what I have fought for for many years, and when I ask you to stand up on November 12th, to vote for me, voter by voter, for this decision, for this Reichstag, you cannot say: this is what you need. Personally, I really don't need it. I could do without it. I still have legal executive power for three and a half years. I'm standing on solid ground. It is not I who need it, the German nation needs it, you yourselves need it. Your work needs it. You will now step up before the world, with me and behind me, and solemnly declare: We want nothing but peace, we want nothing but quiet, we want nothing but to devote ourselves to our tasks. We want equal rights, and we will not let anyone take away our honor.

If we do that on November 12th and if the whole nation does its duty here, then it will become clear to the whole world, perhaps for the first time in German history, that it must now deal with us differently, that it can no longer hope for our disunity and fragmentation, that it must accept what is, specifically, the German people.